



July 16, 2025

The Honorable Michael H. Simon, United States District Judge
Mark O. Hatfield United States Courthouse
1000 Southwest Third Avenue, Room 1527
Portland, Oregon 97204-2944

RE: Labor Unrest with Independent Police Review at the City of Portland

To Honorable Judge Michael Simon,

I am an employee with the City of Portland's Independent Police Review (IPR) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 189 IPR Chapter Chair. AFSCME represents 11 of IPR's 14 employees, as well as over 1,000 employees at the City of Portland, and 40,000 people statewide. We are currently in negotiations with the City of Portland (City) for a successor collective bargaining agreement. This letter is intended to share information with you so that you may have a holistic view of the current status of IPR from the perspective of its union-represented employees as you enter the next status conference with the City and the U.S. Department of Justice on July 29, 2025.

In 2020, IPR employees faced open disparagement, and our work was misrepresented and criticized, primarily by former elected City officials in news articles and public meetings. We organized our union in 2021 after our work was brought into the public debate of replacing IPR with a new police oversight system. Organizing was a critical way to gain a collective, protected, and united voice for our future in public service, particularly as our employment with the City suddenly felt undeservedly threatened.

Despite this harm and the feeling that our credibility has been unfairly damaged, we have — and continue to — consistently provide the City and Portlanders with the services they expect from IPR during this transition of oversight systems. We remain responsible for fulfilling our obligations under City Code and administrative rules to provide impartial civilian oversight of the Portland Police Bureau, and we contributed to the City's efforts to regain substantial compliance with the timeliness provision of the settlement agreement in 2023.

During our current collective bargaining negotiations, we clearly stated our objectives in the bargaining platform we presented at our first negotiation session with the City on March 26, 2025. Our priorities include:

- Options to transition to the Office of Community-based Police Accountability, or receive a respectful option to exit
- Respectful compensation to retain staff throughout the transition
- Strong successorship language that protects our jobs and our contract

To date, the City has failed to provide meaningful proposals or analysis of their position on many of these items. Most concerning to us is their failure to collaboratively engage in providing information to help IPR employees thoughtfully plan for what options would be available to them to continue employment with the City after the transition of oversight systems.

The City's response so far is conveying a willingness to break its promise to IPR as described in the City's Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget Note approved by a former City Council:

"City Council commits to preserving the existing positions in Independent Police Review (IPR) as permanent, ongoing positions. Council acknowledges the importance of the positions and the expertise of the employees who hold them in meeting the terms of the City's settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice. Council also acknowledges the employees' experience and commitment to government accountability are worth preserving as a benefit to the public beyond their current assignment.

The 14 positions will be assigned to civilian oversight of police in IPR through June 30, 2023, giving Council two fiscal years to implement a new voter-approved police oversight board. Thereafter, Council commits to finding equivalent positions upon Transition..." (page 100, City of Portland's FY 2021-22 Adopted Budget, Volume I: [Citywide Summaries and Bureau Budgets](#)).

We are scheduled to enter mediation with the City in advance of our [150-day mandated bargaining timeline on August 21, 2025](#). Our labor agreement expired on June 30, 2025. We believe mediation is an important and constructive step towards purposeful discussions with the City and finding common ground, as it's clear that our objectives are quite distant from one another. We could potentially enter an impasse and a cooling-off period in September.

It is our sincere intention to reach a successor collective bargaining agreement with the City. However, represented IPR employees are aware of this timeline and preparing for all possible outcomes should negotiations fail. All represented IPR employees are AFSCME dues-paying members and have discussed the possibility of a strike in early Fall, if necessary. We don't take this decision lightly, as we understand the significant impact on the City, the community in this heightened moment of local and national tensions with law enforcement and need for civilian oversight, and our compliance with the settlement agreement. We hope the City also understands the gravity of the situation.

I am personally prepared for the possibility of withholding my labor to ensure that the City honors its agreement with everyone in IPR who have put their careers on hold and remained dedicated to our essential work during the transition of oversight systems. We have been working in good faith through challenging times as a team of professionals with extensive, diverse backgrounds and experiences. We are committed to government accountability and deserve respect and recognition as valuable public employees.

Thank you for your time. A signature sheet signed by all of my represented colleagues in IPR and AFSCME Local 189 Council President is attached in support of this letter. I welcome any questions you may have or input and am eager to provide you with thorough answers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gayla', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gayla Jennings
IPR Operations Coordinator
AFSCME Local 189 IPR Chapter Chair and Executive Board Member

Oregon AFSCME Local 189

WE AGREE

We support our Union Bargaining Team and Chapter Chair in our letter to the Honorable Judge Michael H. Simon, including our willingness to strike if needed.

Name

Signature

Erin Playman

Erin Playman

Cody Crites

Christian G. Santos

Corey P. White

Andrew Tease

Eric Nomura

Molly Christmann

David Nguyen

Devinici Elmore

Casey Clithero

Rob Martineau, PRESIDENT AFSCME 189

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